

WASHINGTON (AP) - The retiring head of the Defense Intelligence Agency said Tuesday that a former Central Intelligence Agency analyst vastly overestimated Communist strength in the fateful 1968 Tet offensive in South Vietnam.

Army Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham denied allegations by ex-CIA analyst Sam Adams that key U.S. officials in Vietnam distorted intelligence information to mislead the American public.

Graham, who held an important intelligence job at U.S. Command Headquarters in Vietnam at the time of the Tet offensive, issued a statement after indicating to reporters disappointment that the House Intelligence Committee did not call him for his side of the controversy after hearing Adams.

"Mr. Adams was quite wrong at the time and is quite wrong now in insisting that there were 600,000 armed Viet Cong - North Vietnamese available to the enemy at the time of the Tet offensive," Graham said.

The estimate used by the military command in Saigon the summer before the Tet offensive was about half as large, but Graham said all estimates were too high.

The Adams estimate of 600,000, Graham said, was the worst.

The Adams figures "were rejected because his analysis was bad in the view of most intelligence officers in Washington and in the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV)," Graham said.

He attacked the basis of Adams' estimates, saying that the former CIA analyst based his judgment on captured enemy documents alone.

"MACV analysts viewed these documents as well but were unwilling to place the heavy reliance upon them that Adams did," Graham said.

Many of the documents were reports of Viet Cong recruiters, Graham added, saying, "There was a strong tendency in all VC documents reporting to their superiors to overstate success."

According to Graham, Adams was the only analyst at CIA headquarters following Viet Cong strengths, while at least 30 military analysts at the Saigon command headquarters were following this subject in far more detail.

In addition, Graham said, the military command had U.S. and South Vietnam teams working at the district and province levels throughout Vietnam specifically assigned to provide estimates of guerilla strength.

Graham announced plans to retire after President Ford fired James R. Schlesinger as defense secretary. The general said he expects to leave the Pentagon at the end of this year.